

As Senate fails to provide seniors with tax relief, Congressman Adler delivers more than 2,000 petitions to House leaders

Washington, DC – Today, Congressman John Adler, a member of the House Financial Services Committee, sent a letter to the House Ways and Means Committee, calling on Congress to put partisanship aside and provide seniors with the necessary support to make ends meet during these tough economic times. Congressman Adler also delivered more than 2,000 petitions to Congressional leaders, urging them to pass his bipartisan bill to provide seniors with \$250 in tax relief. Last week, the Senate failed to pass a similar measure.

"During these tough economic times, seniors need relief," Congressman Adler said. "After all the bank bailouts and government spending, the Senate made a huge mistake and failed our seniors. We cannot continue to put our seniors in a position where they have to choose between buying their medicine, paying for their heat, or paying high property taxes. Congress must take action immediately."

For the first time in more than thirty years, there will not be an automatic Social Security COLA (cost of living adjustment) increase in 2010 for seniors and disabled veterans. Congressman Adler urged House leaders to pass his bipartisan bill to support our seniors with tax relief, and send a clear message to the Senate that Americans want seniors to receive their fair share. The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), which includes groups such as the AARP, Alliance for Retired Americans, and National Council on Aging, urged Congress to provide seniors and disabled veterans with a \$250 payment.

In January, Congressman Adler announced new bi-partisan legislation, Restoring the Social Security COLA Act, to provide seniors and disabled veterans with a one-time payment of \$250 to make up for the lack of a COLA this year. The bill is co-sponsored by Reps. Michael McMahon (D-NY), John Mica (R-FL), and Bill Young (R-FL). The bi-partisan legislation is fully paid for by unobligated American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds.

Congressman Adler also launched a campaign to collect petitions in support of the Restoring the Social Security COLA Act. At town halls, community events, and online, more the 2,000 South Jersey residents submitted petitions in support of the bill.

The entire text of his letter to the House Ways and Means Committee follows:

Dear Chairman Levin, Ranking Member Camp, Chairman Pomeroy, and Ranking Member Johnson:

I am writing to request a legislative hearing on H.R 4429, Restoring the Social Security COLA Act. This bipartisan legislation will provide a one-time payment of \$250 for seniors and disabled veterans.

There are more than 134,000 seniors and during these tough economic times, seniors need relief. After all the bank bailouts and government spending, Washington is making a huge mistake by forgetting our seniors. We cannot continue to put our seniors in a position where they have to choose between buying their medicine, paying for their heat, or paying high property taxes. Congress must take action immediately. In fact, President Obama has already made room in the Fiscal Year 2011 budget for a \$250 payment to seniors.

On September 30, 2009 the Social Security Administration announced that beneficiaries will not be receiving a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for 2010. This is the first time in over thirty years that Social Security beneficiaries will not receive a COLA.

The Social Security Act specifies a formula for determining each COLA. In general, a COLA is equal to the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). Currently, the CPI-W contains such things as rent, some medical costs, food, gas and oil among other items. It also includes high tech consumer items such as computers, big screen televisions, cell phones, DVD players that tend to rapidly decrease in price as the technology improves. Seniors however, do not purchase high tech items as often as younger working consumers. Instead, older Americans spend a greater share of their incomes on items that are more rapidly increasing in price-like prescription drugs, health care and property taxes. The CPI-W tends to understate senior costs resulting in COLAs that are not keeping pace with senior costs.

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Attached to this letter is a petition of approximately 2,000 seniors from my district alone, who are being negatively impacted by a zero percent COLA and need relief. Thank you for your consideration and if you have any additional questions please contact me directly at 202-225-4765.

Sincerely,

John Adler
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Steny Hoyer